

No. 3

No. 6

1810.

An
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Cholera Infantum

By William T. Bancroft
of Culpeper County
Virginia

Mr
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Electricity

By William A. Smith
of Cambridge
Mass.

Cholera Infantum

1

This disease becomes most prevalent, and is attended with symptoms of the greatest danger, during the warm months of summer and beginning of autumn.

It prevails in most of the large Towns of the United-States. It generally occurs in the southern states in April and May, but I am informed it seldom appears in Philadelphia or New-York until June or July and continues generally till the latter end of September. It becomes more dangerous in proportion as the heat of the season increases; The temperature of the weather has considerable effect on this disease, sudden changes from heat to cold, and the reverse, sudden and long continued rains, after a very dry state of the atmosphere generally favour the operation of the exciting cause. This disease may occur at any period of the infant life, and few Children particularly in large cities escape some of its various forms. I shall confine myself to one form only, which consists in nausea, vomiting and purging. This complaint most frequently affects Children from the third or fourth week after birth, to the second or third year. It is generally preceded by the usual precursors of the common bilious intermitting and

remitting fever. It comes on, and is continued with evident symptoms of fever, loss of appetite, fits of nausea, and sometimes vomiting, without purging, though more ^{by} usually the contrary - but it frequently comes on with violent purging and vomiting. The matter evacuated per anum is generally of a green or yellow colour, and is more or less mixed with bile, the stools however vary much in appearance in different Patients.

The fever which always accompanies this complaint is of the remitting kind, and is generally highest in the evening. In its commencement the pulse is quick, tense, full and hard; but from the copious evacuations, it soon loses its force, and becomes weak, frequent and quick. Great thirst is pretty constantly observed, and the skin is generally hot and dry - though sometimes a moisture breaks out, on the face, the extremities are sometimes colder than natural. The Child frequently appears to be severely griped. Dr Rush mentions that this disease affects the head so much, as in some instances to produce symptoms of Mania.

The duration of this disease depends much on the manner in which it comes on, the Habit, and changes of the weather &c.

If its attack be made with violence, and left to

nature, the symptoms rapidly increase till the strength of the patient is exhausted, when a fainting comes on, with cold extremities and cold sweats, which put an end to the Patient's life, sometimes in one day. A hot dry and moist atmosphere generally increase the violence of the disease, whereas a cold day very frequently produces a contrary effect by disposing it to a favourable termination. Sometimes it continues without much alteration two or three months, before any considerable change is effected, when the symptoms grow more numerous and distressing, the body becomes much emaciated, the eyes become languid, the mouth sore, sometimes livid spots appear, hiccup and convulsions generally precede the fatal termination of the disease.

This disease may be confounded with Hydrocephalus Intermittens, Dysentery, and affections arising from worms.

In Hydrocephalus, the pulse is more full, tense and frequent, the evacuations are not accompanied with a discharge of bile, the eyes are affected with strabismus and an enlargement of the pupils. These symptoms together with the impatience of the ~~of the~~ patient to disturbance, and the usually constipated state of the

bowels, will generally serve to distinguish the subject of this essay from Dropsy of the brain.

It differs from Dysentery in its characteristic symptom vomiting; or by its invading not only the intestines which are the principal seat of that disease, but also the stomach.

It differs from affections arising from worms by its not being accompanied with that voracious appetite, and disturbed sleep, the picking of the nose and many other symptoms which denote worms.

The predisposing state of the system is the same in this as in all fevers; that is general debility which is of two kinds direct, and indirect. the first depends upon the abstraction of the usual stimuli the latter upon the increase of the natural, or upon the action of preternatural stimuli upon the body. The cause which invites morbid action more particularly to the stomach and bowels, is debility of the parts, which is succeeded by an increased excitability and may arise

1st from weak organization.

2nd from a diseased state of the body, as sometimes happens from debility, and may take place from worms

3rd Irregularity in diet, either in quality or quantity
 4th obstructed perspiration

The exciting causes of this disease are plentifully
 The causes which act generally on the system are
 such as induce fever. those which act directly on
 the stomach and intestines, are

- 1st An increased secretion of bile
- 2nd Aliments offensive from quality or quantity
- 3rd Repulsions of certain eruptions on the skin, and
- 4th drastic purges.

[The Proximate cause of this disease, is that of fever, in general, unduly determined to the Liver and Intestinal canal, termed by Doctor Sydenham the febris intestinalis.] It consists of morbid excitement in the vessels of the Stomach and Bowels

An increased secretion of bile by acting on the alimentary canal, it is generally admitted, will induce morbid action, and the large, as well as very frequent stools is a proof that a preternatural secretion of bile does take place in this complaint

7.
The first part of the paper is devoted to a general survey of the subject.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed examination of the various theories which have been advanced.

The third part of the paper is devoted to a comparison of the various theories with the facts of the case.

The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a summary of the results of the investigation.

The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various points which have been raised.

The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a conclusion of the whole matter.

The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a list of references.

The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a list of names.

The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a list of dates.

The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a list of places.

The eleventh part of the paper is devoted to a list of things.

The twelfth part of the paper is devoted to a list of persons.

The thirteenth part of the paper is devoted to a list of events.

The fourteenth part of the paper is devoted to a list of objects.

CUR

6

Most physicians, and particularly those of the United States agree, that the first and most important step towards a cure, is to remove the patient from the City, to some healthy part of the adjacent Country where medical aid is scarcely necessary.

This like other bilious diseases of the same season, is attended with an inflammatory diathesis in the beginning. When we are called early the first indication of cure must be, to lessen morbid excitement. The remedies for this purpose are to evacuate the bile from the stomach and intestines.

Blood-letting, this has been practised by several Physicians, with the happiest effects. It should be repeated occasionally as the pulse may indicate.

The bile and other acid matters, are to be evacuated by the use of gentle emetics and cathartics. The mildest and best emetic is Spicacuanha in small doses, which should be given in the commencement of the disease, unless the spontaneous vomiting

has been very considerable, when the contents of the prima-~~via~~ are frequently sufficiently evacuated. The bowels should be opened by the

use of gentle cathartics, such as Calomel

7
Manna, castor-oil, Magnesia-alba and Rhubarb
which frequently in the beginning of the disease, when
the stomach is not very irritable will prove ad-
equates to a cure. Calomel is commonly used in
Virginia in preference to all other evacuates in
this disease. When the spontaneous discharge from
the alimentary canal has been considerable, a prostration
of strength, weak pulse & cooling of the extremities are
produced; we may conclude that all further evacua-
tion excited by artificial means would be improper,
and that recourse must be had to remedies to
subdue the vomiting & Diarrhoea and to support
the strength of the patient.

The following mixture I have seen used with the
happiest effect: a few drops of laudanum combined
with prepared chalk into a Sulep. with peppermint
or Cinnamon water. It generally composes the
stomach and intestines and sometimes subdues
the disease. Demulcent drinks, such as barley
water, rice gruel &c are highly useful.

Glysters made of flax-seed tea or starch dissolved
in water, with a few drops of laudanum
in them will often give ease. I have seen
Cold water used as an injection with great advantage.

Channels stopped in infusions of bitter herbs, or in warm spirits and applied to the abdomen, often afford considerable relief.

Blisters applied to the arms, legs, and to the region of the stomach, by translating the determination from the alimentary canal, have been attended with good effects.

When the convulsive action of the stomach and bowels is composed, the strength of the patient must be supported by the use of tonic and cordial medicines.

The principal tonic recommended is peruv. bark, either in decoction or substance; In the latter form however, it can very seldom be taken in doses sufficient to be serviceable, and when taken the stomach will seldom retain it; the bark in decoction, with a few drops of laudanum often repeated in small doses, has produced the most salutary effects. A valuable medicine in this stage of the disease is Columbo Root when given in decoction or in tincture; it is a stimulant and tonic.

The principal medicine used in Virginia in this stage of the disease, is calomel combined

with opium, as recommended by Doctor Miller of New York. Port wine or claret, mixed with a little water is likewise used with advantage at the same time.

The patient will generally at this stage of the complaint, rapidly regain strength, with no other remedy, than that of a diet of a nourishing and gently stimulating kind.

Thus Gentlemen have I completed an Essay, in compliance with a regulation of the University, and I submit it to your consideration, earnestly hoping that you will excuse its brevity as well as its defects. I however cannot omit tendering to you respectively my warmest thanks for the valuable instruction which I have received, by an attendance on your lectures.

William T Banks
of Virginia

Philadelphia, April 2nd 1810

Inaugural Dissertation

Cholera Infantum

for the Degree of M.D.
Submitted to the Faculty
of the Medical University

of Pennsylvania

by James M. Smith
Perkins M.D.

of Lancaster, Pa.

1858

